

MEMO

Date: March 2, 2006

To: Transportation and Communications Committee

From: Alan Bowser, Senior Regional Transportation Planner
(213-236-1843) or Bowser@scag.ca.gov

RE: Letter of Completion for "E" Street Transit Corridor (RSTIS)

SUMMARY

The Regionally Significant Transportation Investment Study (RSTIS) Peer Review Group heard final presentations on January 19, 2006 for the "E" Street Transit Corridor (RSTIS). The Peer Review Group Members agreed that the study presented was complete (see Attachment A) and met the regional (2004 RTP) and federal requirements as outlined in TEA-21, and could thus be provided a Letter of Completion.

The Letter of Completion documents the Peer Review Group's agreement regarding the successful completion of the RSTIS process. This item confirms that SCAG will provide, under signature of the Director of Planning and Policy Department, a Letter of Completion according to adopted SCAG guidelines for the RSTIS Process.

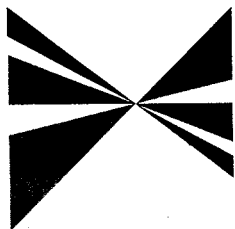
BACKGROUND

Once the provision of the Letter of Completion has been agreed upon, the RSTIS (formerly MIS) Process is complete and draft/final environmental analysis and/or preliminary engineering can be initiated/completed, if required for the Locally Preferred Strategy and/or selected alternatives. If the locally preferred long-term strategy is different from the currently adopted 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (applicable in this case) it can be presented to the Regional Council for consideration as an amendment to the adopted Plan.

attachment

Note: The January 19, 2006 RSTIS Meeting Summary is available upon request (Al Bowser, 213-236-1843).

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



**ASSOCIATION of
GOVERNMENTS**

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McCallon, Highland • Deborah Robertson, Rialto
• Alan Wapner, Ontario

Ventura County: Judy Mikels, Ventura County •
Glen Becerra, Simi Valley • Carl Morehouse, San
Buenaventura • Toni Young, Port Hueneme

Orange County Transportation Authority: Lou
Correa, County of Orange

Riverside County Transportation Commission:
Robin Lowe, Hemet

Ventura County Transportation Commission:
Keith Millhouse, Moorpark

January 19, 2006

Pat Gilbreath, Chair
Board of Directors
Omnitrans
1700 West Fifth St
San Bernardino, CA 92411

ATTN: Durand L. Rall, CEO/General Manager

Subject: Letter of Completion for the "E" Street Transit Corridor (RSTIS)

Dear Mr. Randall:

On November 29, 1993, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued final guidance on new regulations stemming from ISTEA passage. The Major Investment Study (MIS) is one of these ISTEA requirements.

Subsequently, TEA-21 removed the requirement for a "stand-alone" MIS, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) issued proposed new MIS regulations and guidance, expected to be finalized in 2001, and FHWA has advised observing existing MIS guidance until DOT guidelines are finalized.

SCAG's adopted 2004 RTP requires a transportation alternatives analysis study for all regionally significant transportation investments (RSTIS) that might utilize federal funds. Projects in this category are usually capacity adding transit and/or highway improvements.

In addition to an alternatives analysis, RSTIS components also include (1) determining purpose and need, (2) public involvement and (3) consultation among the MPO, county transportation commissions, transit operators, Caltrans, FHWA, FTA, State Resource Agencies and other investment stakeholders.

The range of alternatives considered in the "E" Street Transit Corridor (RSTIS) is sufficient to meet RSTIS Guidelines as adopted by SCAG's Transportation and Communications Committee. Omnitrans conducted an exemplary public

agency outreach process that provided adequate opportunities for public involvement. Moreover, numerous community-level and corridor-wide meetings including the RSTIS Peer Review Group facilitated public agency involvement and consultation during the study process.

On January 19, 2006 the *RSTIS Peer Review Group* met and determined that the "E" Street Transit Corridor (RSTIS) meets SCAG and FTA/FHWA requirements, and that the project is ready to advance from planning to the project development phase as necessary.

Attachment A ¹ is a part of this LOC. It documents the Locally Preferred Strategy and describes next steps as adopted by the Omnitrans Board of Directors on December 7, 2005 to advance the project to the preliminary engineering phase of project development.

This correspondence documents the RSTIS Peer Review Group findings that "E" Street Transit Corridor (RSTIS) meets Metropolitan Planning Rules and is therefore granted this *Letter of Completion*. If you have any questions please contact me at (213) 236-1889 or Al Bowser at (213) 236-1843.

Sincerely,



Hasan Ikhrata

Director of Planning and Policy

¹ Attachment A - "E" Street Transit Corridor (RSTIS) - Locally Preferred Strategy

cc: Rohan Kuruppu, Project Manager, Omnitrans
Gary Green, Caltrans District 8
Alta Grace Balmir, FTA/FHWA Los Angeles Metro Office
Alan Bowser/RSTIS File, SCAG

attachment

“E” Street Transit Corridor (RSTIS) - Locally Preferred Strategy

(16 mile corridor generally following Kendall Drive
from California State University south to E Street, through downtown
San Bernardino, east on Hospitality Lane, and south to Loma Linda)

Attachment A documents the Locally Preferred Strategy (LPS) as adopted by the Omnitrans Board of Directors on December 7, 2005.



APPROVED

DATE: December 7, 2005

TO: Board Chair Pat Gilbreath and Members of the Omnitrans Board of Directors

THROUGH: Durand L. Rall, CEO/General Manager

FROM: Rohan A. Kuruppu, Director of Planning

SUBJECT: E STREET CORRIDOR PROJECT (spX) - LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (LPA)

FORM MOTION

Approve the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) as shown in Exhibit S.1 and the short term LPA as shown in Exhibit S.2 for the E Street Transit Corridor Project, the supporting resolution and submittal to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for approval.

This item was reviewed and approved for adoption at the November 9, 2005 Board Planning and Productivity Committee meeting. Additionally, it was reviewed and approved for adoption by the Project Development Team (PDT) during their October 26, 2005 meeting and endorsed by the public and stakeholders during the October 19, 2005 Public Hearing.

SUMMARY

LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (LPA)

Based on the comprehensive technical evaluation presented in the attached report and public/stakeholder input, the candidate Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) is shown in Exhibit S.1.

The E Street Corridor is about 16 miles long, generally following Kendall Drive from California State University San Bernardino south to E Street, through downtown San Bernardino, east on Hospitality Lane, and south to Loma Linda via proposed Evans Street in Loma Linda.

It is possible that the entire proposed Evans Street Corridor in Loma Linda may not be complete when the LPA is constructed and open for service. If that is the case, a short-term LPA is also included (see Exhibit S.2) which uses the northern portion of proposed Evans Street and then crosses over to Anderson Street using a proposed connector road.

Exhibit S.1: Locally Preferred Alternative

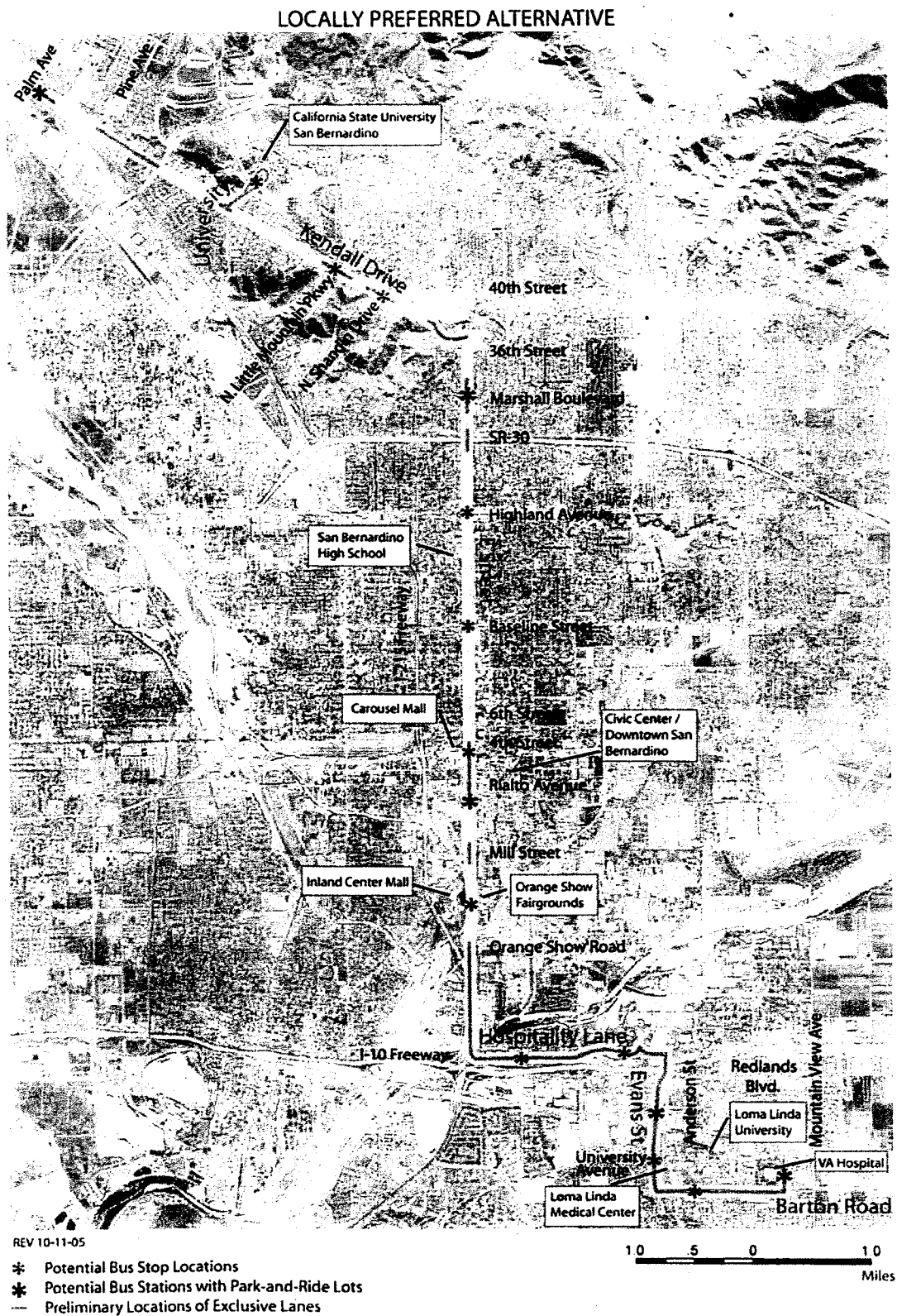
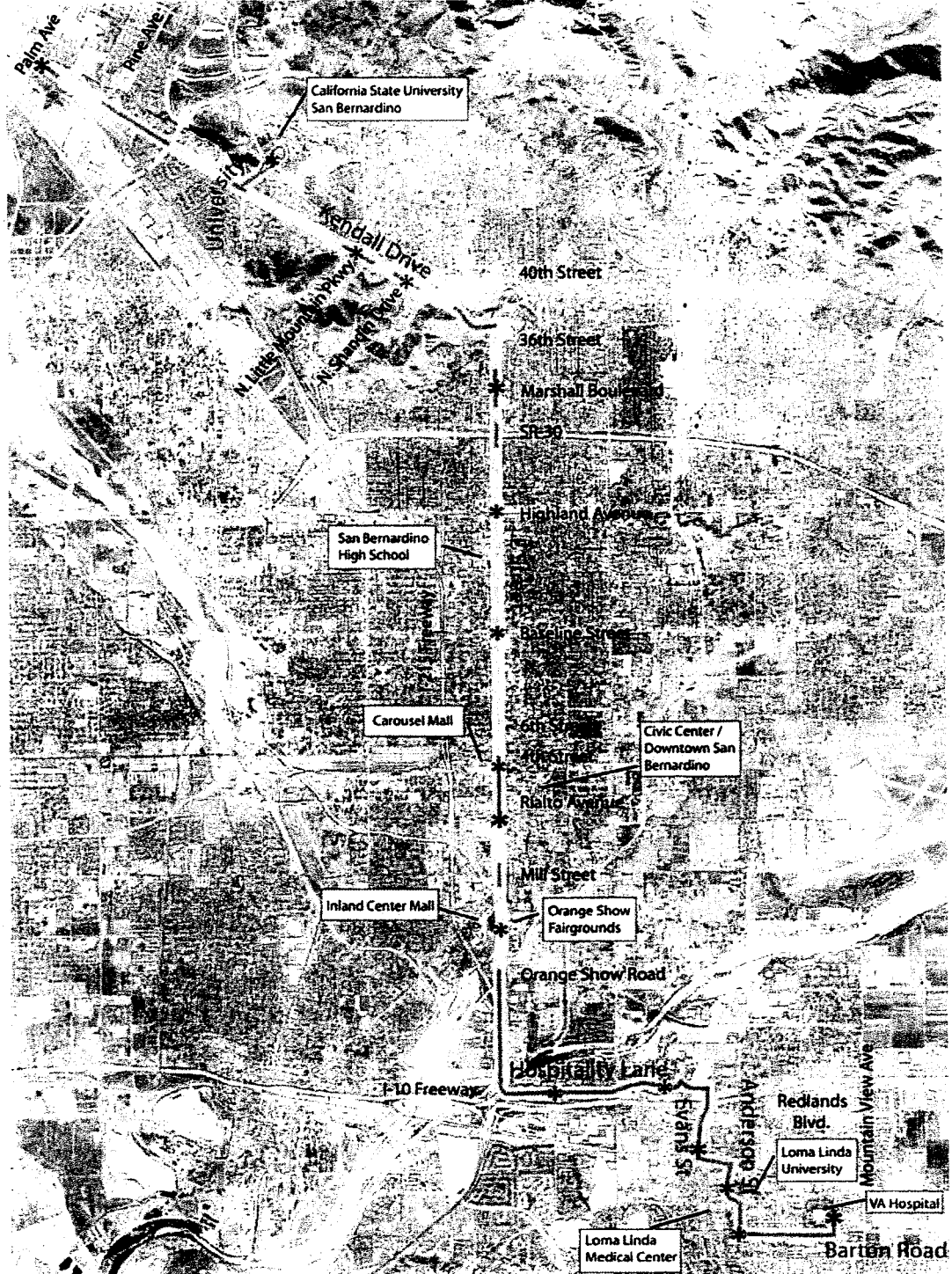


Exhibit S.2: Locally Preferred Alternative (Short Term)

LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (SHORT TERM)



REV 10-11-05

- * Potential Bus Stop Locations
- * Potential Bus Stations with Park-and-Ride Lots
- Preliminary Locations of Exclusive Lanes

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Miles

Omnitrans embarked on a study (Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Alternatives Analysis Study) to determine the best way to implement an enhanced state-of-the-art rapid transit service along the E Street Corridor in the cities of San Bernardino and Loma Linda. Options being analyzed serve California State University San Bernardino in the north; traverse central San Bernardino to Loma Linda University Medical Center and the VA Hospital in the south.

Known as sbX, the new high-tech, user-friendly system being planned will offer more frequent service, fewer stops, and higher average speeds than traditional bus service.

Investing in this new transportation system will greatly improve Omnitrans' ability to meet growing travel demands, encourage redevelopment, and maintain economic vitality along the Corridor. The E Street Transit Corridor Project would be the first segment in a valley wide system of interconnected sbX service.

Enhanced transit service (sbX) will provide more comfortable vehicles, higher frequencies and speeds, which will increase transit usage and reduce traffic congestion, save energy and improve air quality. High-quality express transit service would have:

- Speeds competitive with cars during peak commute hours
- Better reliability because express vehicles travel in dedicated lanes or have preferential treatment
- Short wait times between routes and connecting corridors
- Attractive, well-designed vehicles and stations/stops that enhance adjacent land uses

E STREET CORRIDOR DESCRIPTION

The E Street Corridor is about 16 miles long, generally following Kendall Drive from California State University San Bernardino south to E Street, through downtown San Bernardino, east on Hospitality Lane, and south to Loma Linda.

It runs through a variety of land uses, from low-density residential development in the north to commercial development along E Street. The core downtown area has some of the highest concentrations of office and public facilities in the Omnitrans service area. The southern end of the Corridor contains significant public, educational and medical facilities.

The Corridor supports about 121,000 people and more than 71,000 jobs. Many residents have low incomes and/or are transit-dependent. About 28 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

Numerous key deficiencies and needs have been identified on the E Street Corridor. Existing transit services are slower than auto travel. Given that the Corridor has high transit dependency and an aging population, this translates into reduced mobility for many residents. It also results in low usage by other potential riders, particularly during lunchtime and mid-day periods.

The Corridor is in need of a catalyst to help accelerate revitalization efforts that have not yet been successful. Depressed economic conditions in the central Corridor create a disconnect in development between south and north.

Parking capacity is a problem at the university and hospital campuses. Scheduling existing transit routes is difficult because of the potential for delays, particularly crossing the I-10 Freeway. This problem will get much worse as population and employment grow.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

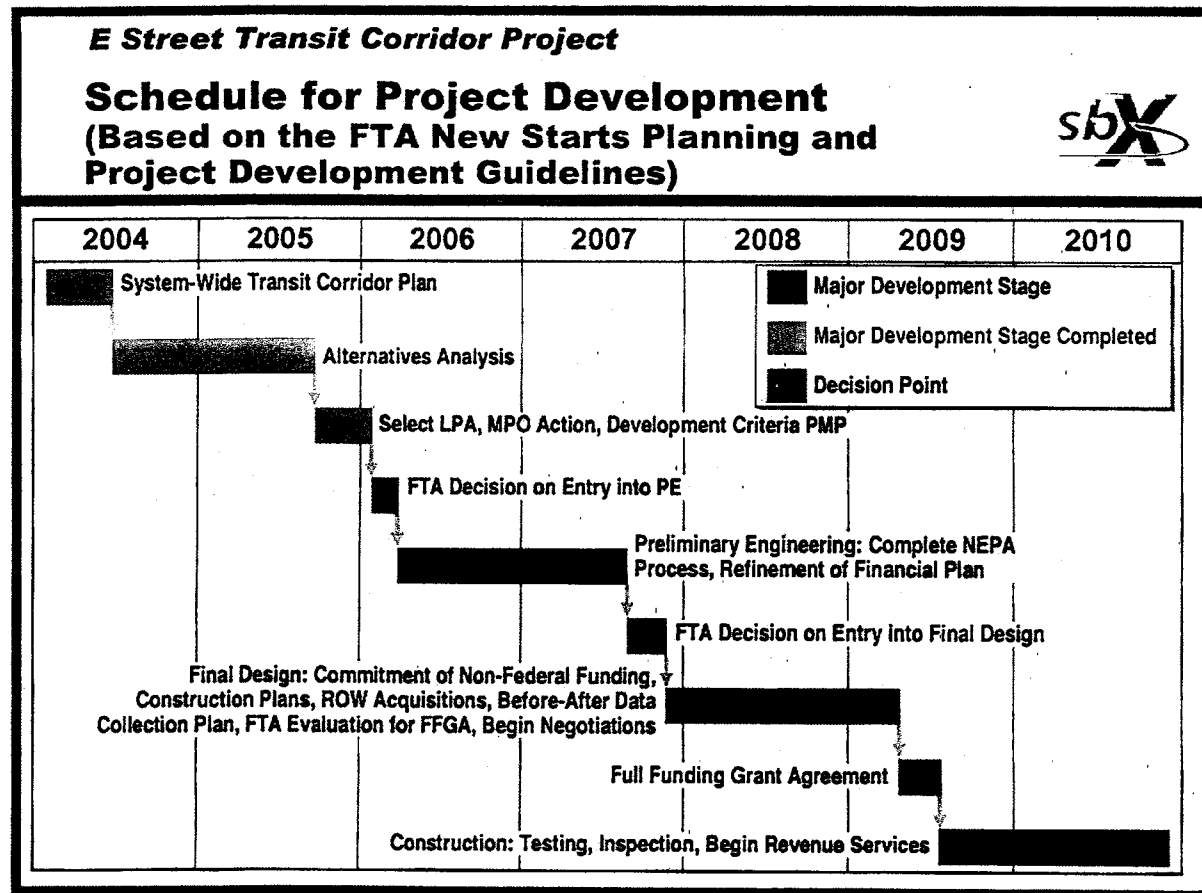
Alternative transit scenarios were designed to address the deficiencies and needs identified above. The alternatives were evaluated based on their ability to meet the following project objectives:

- Enhance mobility and accessibility
- Encourage economic growth and redevelopment
- Improve transit operations
- Provide a cost-effective solution

ACTIONS TAKEN AND NEXT STEPS

- Public Hearing – October 19, 2005, *Endorsed*
- Project Development Team (PDT) – October 26, 2005, *Approved*
- Omnitrans Board PPC – November 9, 2005, *Approved*
- SANBAG PPC – November 16, 2005, *Approved*
- San Bernardino City Council – December 5, 2005, *(Council action was not available when the staff report was prepared)*
- Omnitrans Board – December 7, 2005
- SANBAG Board – December 7, 2005. SANBAG, as the County Transportation Commission, is required to approve all plans for the design, construction and implementation of public mass transit systems or projects (PUC 130252).
- Loma Linda City Council – December 13, 2005 *(Tentative)*
- SCAG RSTIS Committee – January 19, 2006
- PDT Member organization endorsements – December through February
- Inclusion of the LPA in the Recommended List of Projects submitted by SANBAG to SCAG for the 2006 update of the Regional Transportation Plan (January/February 2006)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA) – March/April 2006. The FTA approval of the Locally Preferred BRT Alternatives as presented is the initial action required to advance the project to the next phase – Preliminary Engineering, according to Section 5309 New Starts Funding Guidelines of FTA. Exhibit S.3 summarizes the Federal Transit Administration's Section 5309 New Starts Planning and Project Development Guidelines.

Exhibit S.3: Federal Transit Administration Section 5309 New Starts Planning and Project Development Guidelines.



ATTACHMENTS

- E Street Corridor Project (sbX) – Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) Report. (The full technical report, approximately three hundred pages in length, which is a culmination of all the extensive planning, public involvement, previous technical reports and Board actions over the past two years can be viewed on the project website's information library by logging onto www.estreet-sbx.com or a copy can be obtained by contacting Omnitrans at 909 379 7251).
- A resolution of the Omnitrans Board of Directors adopting the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the E Street Corridor.

PRESENTATION (Approximately 15 min.)

Rohan Kuruppu, Director of Planning Omnitrans and Larry Wesemann, Project Manager, Parsons Transportation Group.

DLR:RK

RESOLUTION # 208-05

A RESOLUTION OF THE OMNITRANS BOARD OF DIRECTORS ADOPTING THE LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (LPA) FOR THE E STREET TRANSIT CORRIDOR.

WHEREAS, Omnitrans Mission is to provide the San Bernardino Valley with comprehensive public mass transportation services which maximize customer use, comfort, safety, and satisfaction while efficiently using financial and other resources, in an environmentally sensitive manner;

WHEREAS, fast, convenient, reliable, safe and cost effective transit is important for the economy, community, air quality, congestion mitigation and overall mobility;

WHEREAS, Omnitrans seeks to expand its value to the San Bernardino Valley in the above areas, by becoming a more critical and useful part of the transportation infrastructure;

WHEREAS, population, housing, and job growth in the region require increasingly proactive planning to ensure that transit can expand to meet the resulting demand;

WHEREAS, rising fuel costs and the general uncertainty of the nation's energy future make it prudent to create the most versatile and useful transit system possible, to provide alternatives to motoring;

WHEREAS, Omnitrans also recognizes the importance of transit to meeting lifeline mobility needs throughout the region, including but not limited to the mobility of seniors and persons with disabilities;

WHEREAS, all-day high quality/highly reliable transit service at high frequencies is crucial to enable Omnitrans to capture choice riders;

WHEREAS, Omnitrans recognizes that Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service is essential to remedy declining operating speeds and degradation of service due to congestion;

WHEREAS, most goals for regional mobility, including effective transit, require the cooperation of national, regional and local governments in all areas that impact transportation, especially transportation funding, roadway design, roadway management, and land use planning;

WHEREAS this cooperation is only possible through the development of a shared long-range vision for the future of transportation in the region and its distinct communities;

WHEREAS, through previous transit planning studies, Omnitrans determined that it needed to invest in a system of premium transit services that could better compete with traveling by automobile and attract new riders from the automotive modes of travel in order to keep productivity high, help reduce congestion, improve air quality and save energy in the Omnitrans service area;

WHEREAS, information in the System-wide Transit Corridors Plan for the San Bernardino Valley will be important to residents of the San Bernardino County, transportation policy makers and local and national government officials representing the Inland Empire and its mobility and funding needs;

WHEREAS, the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), is an extension of the System-wide Transit Corridors Plan for the San Bernardino Valley, which presents seven Bus Rapid Transit Corridors for the San Bernardino Valley, in order to develop a direction for Bus Rapid Transit in the next 20 to 30 years;

WHEREAS, Omnitrans staff determined that it must perform necessary system planning and must follow the specified planning process that has been established for applicants to become eligible for "New Starts" funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA);

WHEREAS, the System-wide Transit Corridor Plan for the San Bernardino Valley was performed to identify the most promising corridors for implementing this new premium service;

WHEREAS, the System-wide Transit Corridor Plan for the San Bernardino Valley adopted by the Board in September of 2004 identified a phasing plan for project development for the seven promising transit corridors in the Omnitrans service area;

WHEREAS, many aspects of the distant future are difficult to predict, the System-wide Transit Corridor Plan's effort is important because of the long lead times involved in land use development, as well as in the development of new funding sources;

WHEREAS, the phasing plan developed for the System-wide Transit Corridor Plan for the San Bernardino Valley identified the E Street Transit Corridor as the top priority corridor to begin project development and an Alternatives Analysis based on the approved guidelines and process established by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA);

WHEREAS, said Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) is the culmination of extensive planning and public involvement by Omnitrans;

WHEREAS, the E Street Project Development Team (PDT) and stakeholders selected the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) based on the results of a comprehensive technical analysis of the final E Street Alternatives and from input from the public;

WHEREAS, on November 9, 2005, Omnitrans Board Planning and Productivity Committee (PPC) endorsed the candidate LPA and recommended its adoption by the full Board;

WHEREAS, the LPA needs to be adopted by both the Omnitrans and SANBAG Boards as well as the San Bernardino and Loma Linda City Councils in order to be considered by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Plan;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) need to see evidence that the E Street LPA has local support and has been adopted locally by all appropriate agencies and jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, the FTA cannot approve moving into Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Studies on the E Street Project until all approvals and LPA reports have been completed;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that:

1. Omnitrans adopts the E Street Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) and its inclusion in the 2006 Regional Transportation Plan.
2. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service is now branded with the name "sbX" for San Bernardino Valley Express.
3. The adopted System-Wide Transit Corridors Plan for the San Bernardino Valley and subsequent updates (every four years) will serve as the sbX Strategic Plan for the Omnitrans service area.
4. Omnitrans is authorized to seek "New Starts" funding for Preliminary Engineering (PE) and Construction from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for successful implementation of the E Street sbX corridor.
5. Omnitrans is authorized to develop and seek public and private funding sources and enter into public and private partnerships to successfully implement the E Street sbX corridor.
6. Omnitrans is authorized to seek the inclusion of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recommended transit supportive land use policies and plans into the General Plans of the cities of Loma Linda and San Bernardino to promote cost-effective transit and create vibrant communities that foster sustainable community development that will work over the long run because it benefits the economy, the environment, social equity, community life, and personal quality of life - all at the same time.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Omnitrans Board of Directors, at their regular meeting held on the 7th day of December, 2005, by the following vote to wit:


AYES: Yates, Hagman, Mitchell, Roberts, Garcia, Lilburn, Petersen, Dutrey, Leon, Gutierrez, Gilbreath, Sampson, Estrada, Pomierski, Riddell

NOES: None

ABSENT: Hansberger, Biane, Postmus, Ovitt

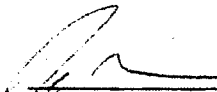


Durand L. Rall, CEO/General Manager
Secretary, Omnitrans Board of Directors



Board Chair Pat Gilbreath
Omnitrans Board of Directors

Approved as to form:



Fiona G. Luke
Legal Counsel for Omnitrans